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AJAX DEFIED THE LIGHTNING

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Leon F. Douglass

TO
ELDRIDGE R. JOHNSON

**A fair-minded and most unselfish man,
who has been my inspiration and guide**

UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA

LEON F. DOUGLASS
San Rafael, California
June, 1919

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AMERICAN

BOOK OF COMMONS AJAX DEFIED THE LIGHTNING

Ajax, it is said, defied the lightning. If he did, he was a fool. A zip-cr-r-ack, and Ajax, as the old Latins would tell us, "has been." Far saner would he have proved himself, had he allowed the thunder to do the talking, while he quietly slipped out of his armor and made record time for the nearest shelter. When the lightning was zigzagging in the sky it was time for him to get in out of the rain. It was silly stage-play to defy the forces of Nature. He had nothing to gain. He had everything to lose. Jupiter needn't have been very particular in taking aim: a coat-of-mail would, by its very attractiveness, have drawn the bolt to the right spot. Ajax, we repeat, was a fool, and every sensible man will agree with us. Far wiser was Franklin. He wooed the Nature that Ajax had defied, and with a simple plaything of childhood enriched mankind with forces that have made the modern world. "Thy eye," said the lover in Shakespeare, "Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder, Which, not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire." (Love's Labor Lost.) Defy Nature, contend with Nature and you reap destruction; bend to her will, observe her laws, and the discords of life will be blended into music, the dross of our humanity will be purified by her sacred fire. Ajax, defiance of Nature, war, decadence; Franklin, conformity with Nature, peace, progress; good and evil, to be determined by choice; this is the lot of human life. The choice is life to the individual. The choice is life to the race. The part of Ajax is manifold and many play it unawares. In condemning him it behooves us to examine in how far we are condemning ourselves.

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For the Laws of Nature are not those only that regulate and harmonize mere material existence; that now bind now separate the atoms in her wondrous laboratory; nor to these that robe the earth in verdure; that swell in the bud and ripen in the fruit; that pulse in the sea, and vibrate in the sun, and bind the spheres in harmonious unity. Her sway is not limited to these. She reaches up into the higher lives of her children and establishes laws for our humanity which, if observed, are more beneficent than electricity, if defied or even deviated from, are more destructive than the thunderbolt. Far back in the ages she had formed all. In each instance she rules all. Nothing is too small to escape her notice: nothing too great to tax her power. Her laws are universal and fixed. Strive as we may, rebel as we may, we cannot escape them.

All successful human laws, therefore, must be based upon the Laws of Nature. For the solution of the problems of every phase of life, conformity to Nature's code is necessary, for she is the source and the guide, the ultimate rule of all human achievement.

And note how wonderfully, and simply, and on what broad lines she proceeds. The beauty and fairness of Nature is, that she makes one set of laws for all. Rich or poor, strong or weak, great or small, all must obey alike. She knows no favoritism. She grants no exemption. Her laws are immutable. She judges impartially and punishes infallibly all transgressors. Human law is imperfect, hence its need of equity. Where equity is absent, there enter privilege, immunity, exemption, partiality. Exemptions breed jealousies; and jealousies, war. Were man to conform to

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and co-operate with Nature's laws, we would enjoy a paradise on earth; by ignoring and violating them, we have the world as it is.

But Nature not only supplies a rule for human conduct, she is equally generous in supplying a remedy for every human ill. Selfishness, envy, greed, egotism and vanity are the most common failings of mankind. They are deviations from the beauty of her ideal, but Nature is never thwarted. Love undermines the fortress of selfishness; open-handedness will level the ramparts of envy; shame will put greed to flight; the desire for the respect of our fellowmen will fetter our egotism and vanity. Man is ruled by the degree of intelligence bestowed on him by Nature. His every act is weighed in her unerring scale. When by his misdeeds he violates virtue, Nature punishes him that she may restore the balance she exacts of all. To see her equalize the balance, we have only to consider the simple, ordinary incidents of every-day life, in which selfishness, greed, envy, egotism and vanity form the chief cast, with selfishness in the leading rôle.

It behooves us, therefore, to bend to her wise and potent sway, and accept, with a willing heart, laws that are made solely for our benefit. The farmer must observe them if he wishes the earth to open up her treasures. The doctor's work is vain if Nature withhold her aid. For every poison she has supplied an antidote. No scientist can invent successfully except by strict adherence to her laws. The manufacturer knows that he must make no effort to evade them. All success in life is their product—attempts at evasion result inevitably in failure.

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The framers of human laws, however, from time immemorial, have foolishly sought to evade Nature's precepts and have broken the higher code; and the pages of history are stained with the tears of the millions who have suffered in consequence. Defiance of them is the defiance of Ajax, and we know him for a fool. It is because human laws and human lives conflict with Nature's laws, that, in retaliation, she punishes us with strikes and rebellions, and unleashes upon humanity the dogs of war.

We do not need to delve deeply into the records of the past to prove our assertion, for the history of the hour reveals it in a flood of light. What is responsible for the present state of Russia? The unnatural condition of her laws. Her rulers, glutted with an autocratic power, made the laws subservient to their private interests, partial to their favorites, and unfair and adverse to the common people. The laws of Nature were set at naught. The Czar, as Ajax, defied the lightning, and it struck, struck with fearful precision and resulting havoc, and the tempest of rebellion swept across the land. Throne and palace crumbled in its path, and the hut of the hitherto oppressed and despised peasant became the seat of power. But alas! and this is the sad part, the masses rising in their might, have been as false to the laws of Nature as the ruler whom they dethroned; and glutted in turn with power, have fallen into equal if not worse excesses. Nature's pendulum of justice and of fairness is not allowed to oscillate in obedience to its laws, and drawn too much to one side by ignorance, and rapacity, and thirst for revenge, it has swung violently to the other side into the bands of those who, led astray by idealistic, unpractical and

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unnatural principles, can never work out the peace and happiness of humanity. By its fair and even and well-balanced motion instituted by Nature, its regulator, the pendulum of justice, should swing impartially between ruler and ruled, marking out for each the blessings of our common existence; but violently drawn to either side in defiance of its laws, both must ultimately suffer in the inevitable reaction. But human authority is ever greedy and history repeats itself.

Nature is unselfish and loves to give of her abundance. Man too often is selfish and clinging tenaciously to what he has, strives to grab from others. Selfishness is the root of most of the faults of mankind individually and collectively. Overlooking the golden mean, men usually sin against discretion and lose that for which they are striving as well as that which they already have. Ajax was not satisfied with the arms with which he defied the lightning. He wanted those of Achilles, and when they were given to Ulysses, he lost his mind completely; and imagining that the flocks that supplied food to the camps were the Grecian princes, his imaginary enemies, he laid about him with the sword that bid defiance to the lightning and slaughtered the innocent victims.

Our country has been divided between the "Wets" and "Drys." It has not been a fair division of our people, for multitudes who are not "Drys" have had no sympathy with the excesses of the "Wets." Still, had the "Wets" been content to abandon strong drink, they might easily have obtained a compromise with the "Drys," and eliminating the saloon evil, have saved light wines and beer. Being selfish and unwilling to cede anything, they lost all. But the "Drys," equally unreasonable, have abused their victory by

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drastic enactments that have fostered needless discontent. Ajax went mad on account of defeat; the "Drys" went mad on account of success, and imagining every moderate user to be in league with their enemies, they have laid about them with the sword of the law, fancying that they were serving justice in this wholesale slaughter. The "Flu" victim may die for want of a needed stimulant. What is that to them? "More," they tell us coldly, "died from drink." And are not others still dying from drink? And will not others still die from substitutes that are worse than drink? But again, what is it to the extreme "Drys," provided that they can slay in their madness? Nature stands for moderation. Excess on either side is baleful. Virtue and Nature tread the middle path.

Capital, too, has been selfish and ridden rough-shod over the rights of Labor. It violated Nature's law and lost much of what it formerly possessed. In recent years it has been brought to a consciousness of its error and has shown an inclination to meet Labor half way. At present the wage earners are receiving more, buying more, and for all that, complaining more. The sale of non-essentials is limited only by manufacturing capacity and is no longer restricted to the wealthy. Capital, on the other hand, is yielding a smaller and smaller revenue on investment. The bondholders' four per cent income has shrunk in purchasing capacity to two per cent, and is still further diminished by the large portion that must be paid the Government in the form of taxes.

So the pendulum is swinging—swinging—not in justice and fairness, but too much on the side of Labor; yet Labor

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is over-greedy and demanding more and more. It is nothing to the railroad employees that the roads are operated at a loss—that the burden of expense is more than traffic can bear. Their demands become only more exorbitant and insistent. What is it to them? “The public must traffic,” so they reason, “let the public pay.” Have they, therefore, ceased to be part of the public and become a privileged class to which the public interests must be totally subordinated? Discretion should teach them that when more water is drawn from a well than is made up by the inflow, the well goes dry; and that the chief sufferers are those who are dependent on its waters. No man ploughs and sows and harrows his field that his neighbors, and the passers-by, and the farm help may reap the crop and leave him the expense account and the stubble. Labor would sneer at the proposal were it asked to do likewise, yet it insists that Capital be satisfied to do so. Nature in her fairness dictates that those who have contributed to the result should share proportionately in the profits. “We have done it all,” Labor extremists say, “the whole profit is ours.” They have not done it all and they know it; and those who are loudest in their shouting are those who have done the least, for they are salaried officials who never put their hand to labor. Discretion, were it listened to, would make Labor standardize the great gains already made. Collective bargaining would be a fair compromise, were collective bargaining not to degenerate into collective dictating. The aristocracy of caste is repugnant to democratic ideals, and hence the aristocracy of unions is repugnant to democracy and Nature. Labor unions would corner Labor in the interest of their members,

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and those who will not join them or whom they exclude from membership, are denied the right to live. They undermine the very foundations of our Government when they assail the individual freedom of the workman; they attack the fundamental law of Nature which gives every man a right to use his energies in the struggle for existence. If there be a corner in wheat, or cotton, or coffee, or coal, or any similar article, Union Labor is unstinted in its condemnation. What would it say if the corner were in air and sunlight? Yet Labor is as necessary to life as the air we breathe and the sunlight that vivifies the world—what judgment, therefore, should we pass on its corner in Labor.

Germany, in the days of her might, held an enviable place in the forefront of nations. By industry, and thrift, and marvelous organization she spread her influence throughout the world. "Germany above all" was lisped in infancy; "Germany above all" was the watchword of life; "Germany above all" was almost a religion; to many, in fact, it was so. But she failed to realize that she was well off, and sought a place in the sun. Ajax was not fool enough for that, fool though he was. Even the fabled Icarus was content with a lower flight, though even he came to grief. The waxen wings of selfishness may lift us from the ground, but they melt when we need them most; and the height to which they raise us is the downward starting point of our ruin. Selfishness impels us indiscreetly, selfishness dazzles and blinds us, and few are they that can discern what is for their real good.

Nature indeed urges men to progress, and to force them onward she has implanted in the human heart a spirit of unrest. But we should not allow envy and jealousy to supplant

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Nature and pervert and misdirect her forces. Nature holds a fair and even balance, but jealousy and envy see only one arm of it, and never stop to examine what is offered by the other. The plowboy whistling in the fields at sunrise envies the soft bed and late hours of his rich master; and the rich master, after a sleepless night, envies the health and the buoyancy of heart of the care-free plowboy. The Packard owner is the envy of the possessor of a Ford; and the owner of the Ford is, in turn, envied by him that has to walk. We weary ourselves with desires of things beyond our reach, and vainly imagine that we will be happy then only when we have more than another. The impulse is good but we must wisely curb it. Like a generous horse it will bear us on our way, but not safely unless kept well in hand. Nature spurs the laggard but checks the reckless. Ambition there should be in all to acquire more than the bare necessities of life. Nature blesses such ambition, for she wishes not only the existence but the comfortable existence of her offspring. Without such incentive civilization would stagnate. But while the impulse to betterment is common, it is not intended in life to have a sameness of expression. The air in an organ is the same but the pipes give forth a varying note, differing in quality and pitch, but all attuned to blend into an entrancing harmony. Some are lower, some higher, but all are proportioned to the resultant unity. Such is Nature's plan in the harmony of human activities. All men might like to be president, few may be. Yet it would be silly to abolish the presidential chair because few may sit in it. Human society is an organic body. Not all its members have the same function; nor, for mutual benefit, is it desirable that they

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should have. What would our body be if it were all tongue? Nature is wiser, and she has made the various parts different; but so that without envy or jealousy and in mutual co-operation, each shall contribute to the welfare of all. These facts are noted with the fleeting hope that their expression may stir up thoughts tending to produce a contentment of mind which is satisfied with the reasonable without striving for the unattainable.

But do not imagine that we are of the class of mere fault-finders who exempt themselves from the foibles and imperfections of our race. We have no sympathy with the self-righteous. We are one of the many and ready to apply to ourselves what we suggest to others, for it is by self-analysis and criticism coupled with a willingness to accept criticism from others, that Nature helps us on the road to self-improvement, and that it is through this philosophy that she would perfect us. In every human heart there is good; in none absolute perfection. We are wary of the Pharisee with his self-commendation. He is trying to sell his goods. "He is not like other men." Thank heaven! We would pity other men if he were. Ajax bragged too much of his deeds and lost the arms of Achilles. "Behold," he said, "the Trojans brought the sword, and fire, and the power of Jove himself against the Grecian fleet; where was the eloquent Ulysses then? And I, with my breast, defended your thousand ships, your sole hope of return to your country." (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Bk. XIII, 91-94.) A little modesty, Ajax, would have shown your deeds to better advantage.

Nature supplies the power but has given us reason to guide it. Without discretion, power is dangerous to its

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possessor. A judge remonstrated with his clerk for carrying a gun. The clerk, nevertheless, persisted in carrying it. In court, one day, he called a man a liar. The latter, infuriated, snatched a chair from the floor, but the clerk drawing his gun, intimidated him and prevented the assault. Thinking it an excellent opportunity of justifying his conduct in going armed, he said to the judge, "You see, if I didn't have that gun, he would have brained me." "Not at all," said the judge, "for if you didn't have the gun you would have had brains enough not to call him a liar."

And as with individuals in power, so is it with parties. Had Germany not had her guns ready, she would not have tried to force her will on the nations, and war would not have resulted. But the guns that bombarded Paris, could, had they reached the French coast, have bombarded London; and the way was clear, she thought, since only a scrap of paper barred her from the road through Belgium. So she smiled, as she entered the contest, at the surprise she was to spring upon an unsuspecting world. The man or nation armed for trouble is not long in finding it. If all nations would disarm, the dove of peace would not have to beat a despairing wing above the troubled waters of international peace.

Study as we may, we shall never fully comprehend the wonders of Nature. "The mill will never grind with the waters that have passed," sings the poet. "A moment," says the scientist, "the thought is pretty, but it isn't true. The mill will grind again and many, many times with this very water." "But the law of Nature bears it away to the distant sea," you say. True, but the laws of Nature will

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bear it back infallibly again. The sun will pick it up and shape it into clouds, and the wind will bear the clouds upon its bosom, and the air will be saturated, and the vapor will condense into rain, and the hills and woods will receive it and restore it to the stream, and the stream will sing on its way, and the mill will grind again. It is a problem of perpetual motion solved under our very eyes, but so common that we give it little thought. There is no chance in the matter. It is the result of clear and unvarying laws, indicating the directive intelligence behind it all. And there is, moreover, law, beneficent law, even where there seems a deviation.

Take the phenomenon of expansion and contraction. The general law is that things expand with the heat and contract with the cold. Water follows this general law and expands with heat and contracts with cold, contracts—but behold the wisdom of provident Nature. The freezing point is approached. The procedure is suddenly reversed. Ice is formed and in its condensation we would have expected that it would be heavier than water. The reverse, however, is the case. Ice is lighter than water at the freezing point, and the design and wisdom of Nature is apparent. Were ice heavier than water, all aquatic life would be destroyed; for the ice as formed would sink to the bottom instead of floating, and each layer building up a solid structure of ice would cause the whole to congeal; whereas now it forms a protection against the external cold and the fishes swim in their element protected by a barrier of ice. And Nature, by a device equally simple and wise has preserved for her children the use of immense tracts of ocean. Moving water

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freezes less readily than water at rest, and salt dissolved in water lowers the freezing point; hence the ocean, over the greater part of its extent, remains open always and air-breathing sea mammals are preserved and thrive.

Nature has many detractors. Who is there that hasn't? She is a hard mistress, we are told, and imposes much sickness and suffering on her children. Have these complainers ever entered into themselves and asked how they have kept her laws? No, she is not a weak mother, we admit, for she has too many vital interests at stake. A child soon learns that it must not put its finger on a hot stove. Fire destroys the living tissue and the sense of pain is an efficient warning. If grown-up children continue figuratively to place their fingers on hot stoves, in spite of Nature's warning, they must expect to burn their fingers. The penalty may not always be apparent, but it is always there. Nature is a patient mother and the child that offends in secret, is in secret punished. Culpable selfishness begets greed, and greed feeds on prudence and wisdom. Over-indulgence weakens the faculties abused and renders them less fitted for lawful pleasure. Reasonable self-love is not selfishness. Selfishness is the culpable excess. Self-love is necessary to Nature's children in her law of the Struggle for Existence and Survival of the Fittest. She has given man intelligence to curb selfishness. Intelligence bids man not to be over-vain, egotistical and wrapped up solely in self. Failure to utilize properly the intelligence bestowed on us, together with the wide-spread self-delusion that we are smart enough to cheat Nature, cause the greater part of life's troubles. No one would be foolish enough to steal, were he certain of

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being caught and punished; yet many sin against Nature, when intelligence tells them, or would tell them if they would but listen, that there is no possible escape from detection and from certain punishment. If you offend, then blame yourself that the mistress is hard and the judge severe, from whose decision there is no appeal. The fault is yours. Why offend? You thought yourself too clever. You imagined that you could break the law and escape. You should have known that you cannot violate the most insignificant of Nature's laws and escape the inevitable punishment. "You can fool all of the people some of the time," said Lincoln, "and some of the people all of the time; but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time." Nature is more vigilant than the people; you can never fool her.

Do you wonder why little children and those who by lack of intelligence are incapable of personal responsibility, are, nevertheless, subjected to suffering, the result of the breaking of these laws unknowingly? The responsibility is on parents and others. It is a double safeguard of Nature thrown around her laws. Our own personal interests might not be strong enough to restrain us; Nature would influence us through the love of those who must suffer with us. The fate of a wife or child is often dearer to us than our own. We will hesitate twice before breaking the law, if they, too, must suffer for our misdeeds. Moreover, even if these sufferings be not penalty, what beautiful traits of character do they not develop. The hunger of the infant stirs up all the love and solicitude of the mother. Pity, sympathy, confidence, generosity, and a host of the sweeter and tenderer affections of our nature, draw their bloom and fragrance

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from the root of suffering. In prosperity, in affluence, in our health and strength, we are prone to self-sufficiency, and the ties that should bind us to our fellow mortals shrink and shrivel because neglected; but a mother's loving hand upon our fevered brow, the word of a friend revealing the depth of his sympathy in our sorrow; help given when recompense and self-interest have no part in the bounty; are gifts of Nature more precious than those that glitter.

But to return from our digression: We insist forcibly and earnestly that the breaking of Nature's laws or the attempting to evade them is at the bottom of the misfortunes that have befallen mankind.

Shakespeare wisely says: "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat, and we must take the current when it serves." We must take the current lest, when the tide turns, we be caught in the ebb. We must keep on the crest of the tide, that our vessel be not stranded and topple over in the mud, or be wedged in by the drifting sands. A man does a great deed, and floats on the waves of popular applause; he must be careful of the shifting wind and tide, lest he drift into the shallows. Heedlessness of Nature's laws invites destruction. Be he over-selfish or over-ambitious he will take too many risks and skirt a treacherous shore. If truly great, he will keep his mental balance and give his ship due leaway.

Napoleon met his Waterloo, and most men who at the flood-time of their fortunes have been lauded to the skies, have met a similar fate. The exceptions to the rule are

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chiefly those who, like Lincoln, passed away before the ebb set in. Admiral Dewey upon his return from Manila Bay was honored as few of our countrymen have ever been. A grateful people presented him with a home. Great in war, his popularity suffered shipwreck in peace. The gift was made without conditions, indeed, but owing to its personal nature, delicacy dictated that he keep it in his name. The gift was to him. His popularity vanished when he transferred it to his wife. He died of a broken heart. Fortunate is the man who does not place his supreme happiness in fame. A bevy of gushing maidens was the undoing of Hobson, "The Hero of the Merrimac." He could navigate a narrow channel but not when sirens lined the shores. "Hobson's choice" was "Thumbs down" for Hobson. Roosevelt, though he will live in history as a great American, struck a reef when he started the "Progressive Party." He will live in history because in spite of mistakes he was truly great; and he was truly great because he lived so close to Nature. The great and fearless naturally make many enemies. We say naturally, but it would be more exact to say unnaturally, for envy and jealousy of greatness are not the effect of any of the laws of Nature, but are the effect of the violation of her laws. Nature is broad in her sympathies. The envious and jealous are narrow. Others soar above them, and they are unable or too lazy to follow. They would clip the pinions of the eagle to keep him on the plane of the mud-hen. But to be true to Nature, the great and fearless must, on their part, preserve due mental balance. Greatness in itself receives fruition in its acknowledgment by the people. Fictitious greatness may hold the popular fancy for a time, but

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the gilding inevitably wears off and displays the baser metal beneath. Nature is the enemy of shame. But popular fancy and public approval at their best are fickle. Trivial things will win them; trivial things destroy. Washington is better known by the episode of the cherry tree than by his war-craft or statesmanship. It is unfortunate that the little hatchet should symbolize the "Father of our Country" rather than some other symbol more worthy of the great truth-teller.

Had Wilson cast his anchor at the height of his tide on November 11, 1918, he would have gone down in history as a peer among men. But extravagant idealism drove his bark upon the rocks. He was easily the first and foremost man of the New World, but, like Alexander, he looked for more worlds to conquer and turned his eyes yearningly to the Old. He forgot that Europe was the graveyard of reputations and fancied that, like Caesar, he had only to appear on the scene and write for posterity, "I came, I saw, I conquered." He could not realize that Caesar's task was child's play to his. He had lived in the clouds and thought that he could lift Europe weighted with its traditions, its prejudices, its diplomacy, to the airy heights of his favorite abode. The reception given him was enough to turn any man's head. He bore his own personality but he was more than Wilson; he was the representative of the American people. He was two in one, and he should ever have kept clearly before his mind the real distinction that existed between the two. It was not Wilson that was fêted. It was the American people. The hand of royalty clasped the hand of republicanism. At least so it should have done. It is unfortunate that it found only the hand of Wilson. He

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thought that he was to be the new savior of humanity, when Nature intended, if indeed it so intended, that it should be America. He was the prophet of high American ideals; but the prophet is only the mouthpiece, not the source of inspiration. He confounded the two and fell. He had reached the topmost rung of the ladder of fame, and, losing his balance, as the winds of national contentions swept around him, and the currents of secret intrigue and agreements shocked him, he had but one way to go and that was downward. On the way up the ladder of fame, the man striving may have many hands to help him; on the way down the number is doubled, and a lot of others would gladly help the descent, could they only get near enough to be of assistance. Alas that the period of only a few short months should separate the top of fame's ladder from the mud at its foot! Had he alone suffered, it would not be so bad. But Wilson as Wilson, and Wilson as America's president, were unfortunately coupled together, and, as one fell he dragged the other with him. Nature requires the ballast of discretion to give poise to her other gifts, and nowhere is it needed more and more rarely found than on the giddy heights of fame. Ajax lacked it and all the race of Ajax.

We have jotted down these thoughts on the laws of Nature, their observance, their benefits, their violations and sanctions, without much attention to logical order or sequence. For we think that Ali Baba was happier in his cave with his treasures scattered about him than if he lived in a museum with every article tagged and in perfect order; and so we are happier with our thoughts, taking now this, now that—at random—and offering it to our friends, content

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if it have some value in itself, or even if it be deemed by them to have some out of kind consideration.

We shall now proceed to consider some details of our legislation which do not seem to us conformable to the justice of natural law.

It is a regrettable fact, but one, nevertheless, of daily experience, that when people go jazzing and jazzing around and tread on the corns of others, there is only a playful smile on the faces of the indifferent, or a rude guffaw from those who like to see others suffer. The jazzers must touch their own corns before connection is made with their intellect. The Government needed revenue and Congress started jazzing. Congressmen are always happy to jazz, except when the salaries of Congressmen, or franking privileges, or mileage, or similar important national interests are concerned; on which occasions a balking mule could in a race give them a generous handicap and win hands down. And so in matter of taxes; for as they did not have to pay the piper they jazzed with gusto and trod heavily on many a corn. But, after all, the corns were only those of the very wealthy. Those whose corns had escaped smiled blandly; "We would gladly pay the tax," they said, "if we had the income." But the jazzer inevitably goes faster, and naturally becomes more careless of his feet, and so the law, taxing incomes, touched many another corn, and the smilers no longer smiled, for smiles and smarting corns are not on speaking terms, and a great cry went up, "Unfair! Vicious! Confiscatory!"

The fundamental principle of our Constitution is equal rights for all. It is the principle of Nature. On this foundation we have reared the greatest nation upon earth. It

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is broad and solid and of prime material. But man may spoil the best of Nature's works. Discriminating laws have been passed, others will follow. The wedge has been driven in; it is there for other blows to drive it deeper. Discriminating legislation is class legislation. Discriminating legislation is the legal separation of the common mass into distinct bodies, with separate and distinct interests, and severs where it should unite. It aggravates and renders acute the disease it pretends to cure, and is a most serious set-back on the road to progress. Great Britain makes one set of laws for the English; another for the Irish. The union is a union of physical force in favor of the stronger. Impartiality begets peace and contentment; partiality, unrest and rebellion. We have said that the law of Nature is opposed to exemptions. No law, therefore, that is based on partiality can be fair. Privilege is the state of being set or the act of setting self above the law. How can others be expected to be content under the law? Such principle, or lack of principle, fomented jealousy and stirred up conflict. Under our Government, everyone should contribute to its expenses in proportion to the benefits he reaps. This is the principle of natural fairness in taxation. He who is benefited more should pay more; he who is benefited less should be taxed less. This is Nature's way of taking toll and man should imitate it. Does Smith care how the Government spends Jones' money if Smith goes Scott-free? If wasted, the waste has cost him nothing; if poorly spent, he reaps gratis some profit at least. Having contributed nothing, he would be considered impudent were he to insist on regulating its use. But if Smith contributes proportionally

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to the expense, even if the amount be small, he has done his part fully, and has a right to exact and a personal interest in exacting the full return in benefits, of what he has given. But the Congressional viewpoint is different. It is not fairness, it is votes. There are hundreds of Smiths to every Jones. The voting power of the Smiths must be conciliated and won; and the Jones family will be allowed to pay for all. So the Jones family is duly taxed. The Joneses pay; the Smiths vote; and Congress divides the melon among its favorites. All are satisfied except the Jones minority, and, being a minority, may be overlooked. Where fairness has lost sway, minorities have no rights. They are safely tucked away in the non-payers' pockets.

A doctor, who, when he is in the same condition as his patient, balks at his own medicine and fights tooth and nail to avoid taking it, shows how he values it in his heart of hearts. The convention of doctors in Congress rose in open rebellion when they were asked to take their dose of Income Tax patent medicine. The bottle had been labeled "The pure essence of honey; good for all diseases and some others; so pleasant to the taste that the hardest heart would be pained at having to refuse the patient in his pleadings for more." But suddenly the same bottle filled with the same ingredients is held up in Congress, but its label has been changed. Its chief ornaments are the skull and cross-bones, and the label has been simplified into "Fatal to Congressmen, no matter how small the dose. Poison! Beware!" The thing just couldn't be done. The salaries assured them would be virtually reduced. The salaries of the people could be reduced all right, for the benefit of the people; but

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the salaries of the servants of the people must remain intact, for the benefit of themselves. They, surely, were those who were drawing least benefits from the Government and why should they be taxed? As if sauce for the goose were not sauce for the gander. It was unfair, so argued Congressmen, for the Government to assure them a salary and then deduct a part; but it wasn't unfair for the Government to assure the people four per cent on Liberty Bonds and then take back a portion of the interest in Income Tax. Congressional consistency, thy name is mud!

The first Income Tax law granted a three thousand dollar exemption for each unmarried man and woman; but allowed a married couple only two thousand apiece. Was it the purpose of Congress to discourage marriage? Or was it a simple problem of Congressional arithmetic that, as two now made one it had really increased the allowance instead of diminishing it?

But in the Inheritance Tax there are other things against Nature's fairness. A man spends his life and energy in building up a business. He has been industrious and saving, and has acquired a fortune which is still bound up in the business. He has children and Nature imposes on him the duty not merely of rearing them in the present, but of providing for them in the future. Could he live here forever, future provision, perhaps, would be less needed. But Nature's law is inexorable and he must obey it. The children must one day play their own part in the struggle for existence; and he who brought them into life must, in duty, so far as in him lies, help them on to success. In this he is but working with Nature and obeying her law. The squirrel

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is urged by Nature to work industriously to lay up a winter's supply of food, that he may carry his family safely over the period where existence has so many odds against it. Because the parent squirrel passes away, there is no reason in the world why his young should give up a portion of what he has accumulated for them. Nor is there more reason in humankind. Nay, there is often far less, since the offspring of man is less fitted, at certain ages, to provide for itself than the young squirrel is. Yet when a successful provider for his family dies, the Government steps in and demands a part of the store laid up, a large part if the business be considerable; and demands it even to the extent of loss of control of the business, on which the well-being of the family depends. And this is the more unfair, seeing that the business has, year by year, been taxed heavily on its income, and the residue left the owner to bequeath to his family, was considered only his due. And the business will still go on being taxed despite the fact that the Government has claimed and received its legacy. But it is again the case of Smith claiming Jones' money. What does Smith care? And yet the Government, if true to Nature, should care; for the tax discourages thrift and encourages the spendthrift. But as Congress is notably a spendthrift we have not far to seek the inspiration of the law. Subversive, nevertheless, it is of the law of Nature. Ajax looks only to himself in the division of the spoil.

Reasonable self-love is Nature's law, and reasonable self-love dictates self-preservation, and self-preservation includes the preservation of wife and children, for they are our second selves. This self-preservation makes tax-

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slackers of us all, especially when the taxing power pursues us as if we were its prey. Everyone, therefore, clamors for exemption. Take the other fellow and spare me and mine. Yet for everyone exempted, someone else must pay. The total sum demanded is in no way diminished on account of exemptions. All that results is that a larger share is demanded of those who bear the burden. Exemptions do not solve the tax problem, for nothing is really solved until it is solved right. The masses would be exempt from taxes. They would therefore be the objects of the munificence of the rich. The Stars and Stripes would wave above them by the grace of the few. Selfishness raises a barrier around each of us and few can see beyond it. Are our people blind to danger? Have they never read how the Roman Republic fell? The Roman people looked to the Government for largesses. "Bread and the Circus" became their cry: a life without toil, a life of amusement. It is attractive but it is not the law of Nature. And the Romans who had loved their liberty for centuries as well as we love ours, became slaves, and a Nero and a Caligula reigned over them. Had this been foretold to Brutus, or Cincinnatus, or any of the sturdy patriots of earlier years, they would have hooted the prophet as a madman. Yet we are reciting history. Rome fell. Nature's laws of labor, and personal exertion and sacrifice, was violated and the stagnant pool became busy with its deadly miasmata. The Roman Government had to supply the needed money. It began by plundering the provinces. It ended by the plunder and conscription of its wealthy citizens. It had to supply the masses with "Bread and the Circus," and Government and people went

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down in a common ruin. The American Republic has no provinces to plunder. It has therefore begun on its wealthy citizens. We are madmen, we will be told, to cry disaster. But he who will listen no longer hears the cry of confiscation muttered in secret among the few, he will hear it openly advocated by many, and the cry is swelling. The Government has led the way.

The Luxury Tax is not opposed to the law of Nature. The vine that is wisely pruned and the fruit-tree lopped, give better fruit and a more abundant yield. Nature is aided, not thwarted. Both vine and tree are healthier when the super-abundant is trimmed; and Roman independence flourished while its sumptuary laws were wisely enforced. But tree and vine must be carefully handled. It is not sufficient to take pruning-hook, and shears, and saw, and hatchet, and cut and hack away at random. The superfluous will surely go, but tree and vine will have lost not only their symmetry and beauty, but their fruitfulness and vitality as well. Nature's law does not limit life to its bare necessities. It encourages reasonable comforts. But our Government has gone out into our lives and hacked at everything; and then it opens its eyes in wonder at the popular discontent that is spreading. Instead of wisely correcting the evil by a proper use of brains, it foolishly centers its hopes in the strong arm of repression.

The masses clap their hands and throw up their caps in joy that luxuries are taxed. They fancy that the burden has been lifted from their own shoulders. Has it really been lifted? Let us see. We have stated that the law of Nature is not the law of bare necessities only, but of reasonable

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comforts. A nest of twigs would suffice a bird for the mere containing of its eggs and perhaps for the bringing up of its young. But the bird lines its nest with wool or horse-hair. It would supply for its tender brood warmth and comfort. Its work is much more artistic and elegant than the law of bare necessities requires: and the same impulse to comfort and more than bare necessities is as firmly implanted in the heart of man. Hence as wages rise, the tendency to comfort waxes stronger. The masses too would have comforts and luxuries. But these are taxed, and hence the masses too must pay. To really enjoy exemption, the masses must be content with conditions that would not be privations in primitive conditions, but which are privations in those that obtain at present. And lo! the hands have ceased to clap, and the caps are pulled down grumblingly about the ears, as the luxury tax puts its greedy hand into the pockets of labor. And let us not forget that luxuries are produced by the masses. The purely luxurious never produce what they consume. Limitations must curb excess but must stop there. We are not opposed, therefore, to a sane luxury tax, and the man that considers it a nuisance has probably the same opinion of his grocery bill. We are merely calling attention to the fact that the playful practice of passing the tax "buck" usually ends in having the "buck" returned to the permanent possession of the passer. Be careful, Ajax, Ulysses will get his turn.

Nature's law postulates equal rights for all who are in equal conditions. She does not, however, make all conditions equal. The soil of the bare and wind-swept mountain is not as fertile as the rich loam of the sheltered valley.

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The pure and crystal waters of the leaping stream have a life and vigor and motive power which are denied the low-lying festering pool. Tree differs from tree and plant from plant, in age, and vigor, and beauty and productiveness, even though they belong to the same species. No two leaves even on the same tree are exactly alike, though they conform to a general type. Diversity in sameness is Nature's law of harmony and beauty; but man would reverse it and make it sameness in diversity. Nature, therefore, gives all an equal right to engage in the struggle for existence, and favors success by the very diversity of conditions in which she places her children. It seems a paradox that were all rich, all would be poor; yet such is the fact, for in such a condition no one would be inclined to perform the less agreeable offices of life. This is already apparent in conditions among us. Our sewers would not be constructed, our streets repaired, our railroads built, were it not for imported labor. Housemaids are becoming an extinct species, and cooks—well, we have reached the limit. The law of Nature is labor. Where labor ceases disintegration sets in—insensible, perhaps, to the human eye, because often slow and patient in the process. The paint on our house loses color, wears off ultimately, the boards blacken, the nails rust and the wind dislodges them; the small boy, more impatient and less long-suffering than the elements, takes a hand. Sun and air, wind and rain can now take a nap and confide their interests to the small boy. We would not labor. Nature is never idle. It is her law and it cannot be changed. We thought that we had fooled her and again she has fooled us.

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There are two brothers; one will labor, is industrious and thrifty, a benefit and credit to his family and his fellow men. The other is lazy and prodigal, easy come, easy go, the drone that would feast on the honey gathered laboriously by his busy kindred. He politely, or more often impolitely, declines to enter into Nature's struggle for existence. The only struggle he will make is to get all he can of the honey already in the hive. He will buzz and buzz about that endlessly, grumbling that he is not getting his share. Half the energy wasted in his buzzing would make a lot of honey. But he is not a honey-maker. Honey-making is out of his bee-line. He considers his industrious brother merely lucky. Why, he asks, does luck never come his way? He forgets, or blinds himself to the fact, that in Nature, Luck usually chums with Industry. If Luck now and again has a chance acquaintanceship with Idleness, it soon drops it. You may, indeed, bump into Luck without looking for it, but the harder you try to find it the oftener you will bump into it. And so the human drone would evade Nature's law of struggle. There is no evasion. She has made it for an excellent purpose and will not be thwarted. The struggle for existence is for the survival of the fittest. The race must advance or go under. The individual must struggle if he would survive.

Nature is ever attentive to the carrying out of her laws. If she sleeps it is with one eye open. The masses continually grumble and criticize the Government for the manner in which it rules. They are merely finding fault with themselves, without being candid enough to recognize their fault, or sincere enough to try to correct it. It is within their

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power and their right to operate the Government as they see fit. They are the sovereign people. For this, they gave themselves the right to self-determination by vote. They can change every law in the land by exercising their right. Their power is supreme. When matters are left to the votes of the people, we can safely trust the majority, for it will have the best interests of all at heart. So long as this right remains sacred to the masses and is exercised by them in a spirit of fairness, there is no more chance of a Bolshevistic revolution in this country than there is for a snowball to exist in the place which Sherman considered the synonym for war. The doctrine of the Bolshevik, like that of the infidel, blasts all hope and gives nothing in return. The Bolshevik gives everything to the state and leaves the individual nothing. Nature, on the contrary, gives her fruits to those who labor. Who would labor in the Bolsheviki commonwealth, if indeed it be a commonwealth and not a confiscation for the prime benefit of the spoilers? Not the rulers, for they have the disposal of everything. Not the subjects, for they have no incentive. Those who have been robbed of their possessions will not be fools enough to strive to hoard again. It would, moreover, be crime. Those who have been prospered by the robbery of others will not easily desert the spoiler's trade. "But all will be forced to work. The tasks will be assigned and exacted." But this is slavery of the lowest type. The rulers are masters, the subjects slaves, and the masters will never willingly return to be lost in the masses. You cut the tree of human progress at the very root when you destroy human initiative and the proximate hope of self-

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betterment. You destroy ambition and self-effort when you drag everything down to a common level. And, after all, no common level is possible in a world which ceaselessly changes with the changing moment. The principle, therefore, is as false to human nature as it is to the laws of Nature in general. It would not eliminate the evils of other forms of human government, but would add to them. It would not destroy classes, for ruler and ruled would still be in essentially different conditions. Those would assign the tasks, exact the fulfillment, punish disobedience, handle and divide the profits. These would have to accept the tasks, labor to execute them, accept punishment for failure, and turn over the proceeds, accepting what moiety their masters would assign them. Self-preservation would ever keep alive a scramble for power. Self-preservation would cause those who possessed it to cling to it for dear life. All would be officers, none private. Jealousies, intrigues, favoritism, speculations would flourish. We have all these in Russia to-day. We had them in the French Revolution, and France survived only through the despotism of Napoleon. We do not want salvation through despotism. We do not want, consequently, the Bolshevistic state. If to-day in our own country, politicians court and favor those who can help them into power; if they give the plums of office to relatives and friends; if the division of the pork-barrel so whets human greed, what would be the condition when the whole country would be the crop of plums and the pork-barrel to be divided? We would have not only to change human nature but Nature itself to succeed. We cannot equalize human intelligence and energies, much less the

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moral qualities of the heart. We cannot equalize climates and soils and the rays of the sun and the amount of wind and rain. We cannot have all sea-coasts, or rivers, or cities or smiling valleys; and even if we could we would have to change them to make them equal, for all are of infinite varieties. And if, by impossibility, we had made them otherwise equal, all could not be equidistant from the same point. Some must be nearer the railroads and similar facilities; some must be farther. No human intelligence could portion out tasks in justice and fairness and satisfy a hundred millions of different inclinations and characters. Human nature tires of the same place and work, especially when place and work are not a matter of choice, and when there is no self-interest underlying. Every socialistic colony has been a rank failure, though the problems have been a billion times smaller than they would be in a nation like ours. The system could only bring chaos into human society, and the inevitable consequence—savagery.

Superstition plays its part in retarding human progress, for superstition is no friend of Nature. Ignorance of natural phenomena is its fruitful parent. It exists among savage tribes and is not unknown among so-called civilized peoples. Even men of high intelligence in other things are not totally free from its traces, believing in the Ouija board, luck and unluck and shuddering at the number thirteen. The darkey who carries the rabbit's foot for luck, forgets the fact that the rabbit was very unlucky when he himself had it. The Sultan of Turkey not so many years ago forbade the importation of talking machines because they were "devil machines." Doubtless afflicted with a harem, he had talking

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machines enough; but he need not have fled to superstition for a reason. The world would have believed him without the reason he assigned. Superstition vanishes with enlightenment, and because the sources of many natural phenomena are still unknown there is no reason for seeking the explanation in superstition.

Nature in effecting her works employs the most fitting means. Man would do well to imitate her wisdom. Running the Government of the United States is running the biggest business upon earth. It involves more than the management of governmental affairs, since Congress lays the foundations on which all private enterprises among us are built. Nature, had she the job on her hands, would choose the best fitted instruments. We do otherwise to our sorrow. Congress that shapes the destinies of business is itself an exceedingly ill-balanced business organization. About ninety per cent of its members are lawyers; and it is a well-known fact that lawyers, as a rule, are not business men. The fact could not be otherwise. Lawyers have never had the proper training. It is no fault of theirs. Their study and training follow different lines. Everyone to his own trade. It requires a lifetime of application to become proficient even in a single branch of the law, not to speak of the immense forest of laws through whose devious ways our modern lawyers must wander; just as it takes a business man a lifetime to master one branch of business. It is to the discredit of neither that he is not proficient in the specialty of the other. A prudent business man would never attempt to handle a complicated legal matter, lacking as he does the legal training and experience of the lawyer;

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and should such case turn up in his affairs he at once commits the matter to the lawyer's hands. Does not common sense teach us that, conversely, the lawyer should do the same in business matters; and this the more so as to-day is the day of specialists? The day of "Jack-of-all-trades and master-of-none" is done for with the passing of primitive conditions. The struggle for existence is keener, and we must meet it as it is. Congress, therefore, dealing as it must with highly specialized and momentous problems, should, above all, be a well-balanced body of specialists selected from the varying interests that represent our national life. If progressive Nature rejects the Jack-of-all-trades in private business, where after all the interests are subordinate and often petty, much more does she insist on rejecting him in public business on which depend not only the well-being but the very existence of the nation. It is plain, therefore, that a large proportion of the members of Congress should consist of experienced and successful business men. What would the last war have been, had practical organization been left to Congress? But the best business men of the country in a true spirit of patriotism took the matter in hand, and the war was won. It is true that the conditions of peace are different from those of war, but the difference of these conditions has no bearing on the fundamental and essential principle of efficiency. Theorists and idealists may suggest. Restricted in their sphere, they may be of incalculable help; but in the practical sphere, which is the sphere of Congress, we need the practical man, for he, and he alone, will know whether in given conditions the theory will or will not work. Thus it is that many laws of Congress,

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the pet fads of unpractical theorists, have imposed unworkable conditions on business, to the common detriment of the whole nation. Ajax defied the lightning and that was bad enough. It was only when he was completely daft, however, that he mixed himself with the practical commissariat of the camp and threw it into complete disorder. But this, at least, must be said of him, he didn't pretend, in his folly, to be serving the public interests.

The mismanagement of the railroads is an illustration of my point. From a profit-paying business under competent and efficient management, to a bankrupt concern involving in the last eighteen months a loss of nearly a half a billion of dollars under Jack-of-all-trades inefficiency has been the appalling but inevitable decline of our railroads. Nature's law of efficiency and fairness was set at nought, and the resultant failure includes not the monetary consideration alone, but the degeneration of roads and roadbed, degeneration of equipment, degeneration of service, increased rates. There were four elements to be harmonized in the problem: the interests of the public, those of labor, those of capital, and those of individual Congressmen. The last element does not belong by right to the problem, for Congressmen are the servants of the people; self-interest, however, insisted on its retention. It became, in fact, the main element. The Congressmen, therefore, to hold their position, which depends on popular vote, sought to curry favor with the public and with labor. It was not a question of fairness all around. It was a question of personal political expediency; and, as in the present condition of popular sentiment, Capital could more easily be sacrificed. A law

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regulating railroad rates was passed. The suffering public accepted it; restless and defiant Labor pocketed the pecuniary profit; two legs of the Congressional tripod were strengthened, the third, Capital, had to bear the whole strain. So Congressmen clapped one another on the back. They could fool the people some of the time, and Congressmen often think that the people enjoy the process no matter what the cost. But we cannot repeat too often that Nature cannot be fooled; and, we should add, it is dangerous to fool with Nature. The problem was not solved because not solved fairly. Labor looked to its own interests alone. It was ready to paralyze industry and cause no end of suffering to the nation if its excessive demands were not complied with. "Yield, or we strike," it said, and Congress yielded. But Labor so placated is only the fire when new material is thrown upon it. Its flames subside for the moment, only to rage more fiercely with the super-added wood. Labor's demand had brought compliance; there was no limit any longer to what it could demand. It could always "strike"; and this is the condition of the roads that Congress has turned back to Capital. Congress has the billions of the country to prey upon. Capital has not. Congress can run the railroads at a loss and tax the public to cover its inefficiencies. Capital cannot. Receipts must cover the outlay. They must do more if human energy is to be employed in it. Exorbitant rates kill business. Exorbitant rates are required to satisfy the exorbitant demands of labor. The industrial life of the country is hanging by a thread. No wonder that Mr. McAdoo skipped out of the muddle. The laws of Nature, for success, require, as we have said, a proper balance. Just

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as water strives to keep its level, so everything, to be stable, must balance perfectly. Unbalanced things in Nature are impossible. The aviator falls to his death, when, by some derangement in his machine, the balance is lost. To fly, his machine and his actions must be shaped by Nature's laws; and by Nature's laws must human laws be shaped, else those who use them inevitably fall as falls the aviator. Every intelligent man sees that the unbalanced condition of railroads threatens ruin. The railroads are the arteries of our national life. A railroad war prevents the necessary distribution of materials throughout our national system. Even without a railroad war, present conditions bleed the carrier, who perishes on the way. The only solution is a reduction of Labor's demands, and Labor is demanding more. The fault is in the radical element of Labor whose only thought is plunder; plunder under the law, if may be; plunder outside the law if necessary. It would kill the goose that lays the golden eggs to feast on the goose. And provided that there are enough geese for themselves to feed on, and they are the only ones in their idea fit to live, the rest of humanity may feast on the feathers. It is to be hoped that the conservative element in labor will prevail, for in a labor revolution they would fare no better than ourselves. The seeds of unfairness are not of American origin. The conditions of American life are not favorable to their growth. We are confident, therefore, that matters will finally adjust themselves and that the unnatural and irrational legislation that caused the unbalancing of our railroads will be repealed in favor of compulsory arbitration. We regret, indeed, that matters should come to this, much

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preferring as we do the milder method of friendly compromise. But our Jacks-of-all-trades insisted on playing the part of the doctor, and the natural result is a very sick patient.

Nature is not wasteful. To the unscientific eye she may seem to be so, but science teaches that she is the most thrifty of housewives. She wastes nothing. The giant of the forest, having fulfilled its purpose, sinks into mold. It is only that this mold may nourish a more vigorous successor. It is always so when she is left to herself. It is man, who does not leave her to herself, that is the cause of waste. He is wasteful because it is her treasures that he is using. It is Smith with Jones' money, and the Postal Service of our country has all the other Smiths green with envy at its success in wasting. It is practically a monopoly, and having no competitors, business necessarily flows to it even without its seeking. It needs no drummers, advertising is free, it deals with a commodity that is a general necessity of everyday life. It has everything that Nature can bestow to make it a success. It has, however, been operated for years by the Government at a loss. Postmasters, imposed by the exigencies of party or appointed for political reasons, too often serve as mere, though expensive, ornaments. Assistant postmasters do the real work at salaries half the size of what are donated to their figure-head chiefs. In private business, these latter would be stirred to energy by the prospect of advancement; if, indeed, the necessity of efficiency for the keeping of their jobs did not stimulate them to energy. Were the Post Office a private enterprise, there would be natural incentives to work diligently. Here there are none. The officials work for a salary. Their position is political,

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secure if they have a drag, insecure if they haven't no matter what their experience and competency. And, more than this, efficiency is the surest door to dismissal if exertion and activity on their part cast a headlight on the supineness of a political pet. Millions of dollars are thus wasted yearly. No private business could succeed under such conditions. Neither does the Post Office succeed. Its failure is taken for granted by all, remains unexplained, uncorrected, and is allowed haphazardly to continue. Inefficiency, irresponsibility and lack of purpose drag on and we do not seem to care.

Do not say that we are not interested in the matter. We are all interested. It is our business. The money that could have been saved in the Post Office Department in the last ten years without loss of efficiency, had sound business practice instead of slipshod political methods been followed, would have built a perfect system of highways throughout our country and property values would have been increased by billions of dollars. Everything follows good roads—homes, farms, manufactures—for perfect transportation facilities lessen costs and consequently increase profits. And even where profits are not increased the diminished price of the article puts it within the means of the ordinary consumer. Prosperity and happiness, pleasures and comforts, are the result. The wasted money deprives the public of comforts to which all are entitled. To say that it is necessary to run the Post Office at a loss for the good of the people is unsound and silly. There is no such necessity. It is only an application of the old quack theory that prescribed blood-letting for all the ills that flesh is heir to. The

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ordinary man is none too rich. Keep the blood, then, in the veins of the nation, but render it sound and healthy by purging the system of mismanagement and graft; and if you do not wish to employ the savings in public benefits, do a public benefit by affording lower rates and we will do the saving.

Nature distributes her energies. She has made two hemispheres divided by oceans. She has established natural boundaries on the continents and divided her children into races and nations. The Government naturally loves concentration of power. It is un-American, for our constitution divided the functions of Government precisely for this purpose, that concentration, the principle of monarchy, should never sap the strength of democracy. The framers of our constitution sought the development and perfection of our people with the minimum of authority consistent with this purpose. The war, as an abnormal condition of affairs, demanded, perhaps, the concentration of public utilities. We were in the war to win it at any price. If concentration would help, as it should and did help, we were willing to make the sacrifice. We speak only of the effect of such concentration, namely the deterioration of public utilities under the control of the Government. Perhaps it is better that the opportunity was given, as it practically showed the fallacy of what some theorists advocated. Railroads, shipping, telephones and telegraph supplied matter for the experiment. The result is denied by no one. He who runs may read. Compared with private enterprise, the Government was a failure. If such was the result in a limited field, what would it have been in a field covering all the lines of production and distribution? Its management of

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the Post Office is a failure; its administration of railroads a failure. So much is it a failure that railroad employees think that they could run the railroads better by themselves. If the Government will stand the loss, that is, if the people will, for the burden will fall upon them, it might be well for general peace to make the trial. The private capital, however, invested in the railroads should be protected; for railroad employees have no right to experiment with other people's money. Were such right once established, even in a single case, the employees of every business would claim the right to run such business, to the nation-wide spoliation of property, confiscated merely on the plea that the owner had hired them to do his work. We merely say that with due safeguards of justice, the experiment of railroad employees though costly, would pave the way to peace; since they and the public would realize that outsiders should be careful about mixing in what they are ignorant of, and subordinates would learn that there are more difficulties in management than ever entered into their heads. The sane way would be to return the railroads to their rightful owners for operation, limit their profits to a fair rate of interest, provide for a definite percentage to be put aside for repairs and betterments, and if there be a surplus establish lower rates for the public benefit, or establish bonuses for efficiency of service.

Did Government control show efficiency in our Merchant Marine? It was built by the Government under Government management at almost twice the cost at which it could be produced in England; and was built to compete with other countries that can operate ships at half the money we

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have to pay. How is competition possible with such a handicap? Let us grant the need of an American Merchant Marine. We are not condemning it. We are condemning solely the waste of Government construction and operation. If its existence be of public utility and necessity, let us choose the method of greatest efficiency and least expense, and that is to leave the construction and management to private ownership, assisting with such Government help as may be needful to success. Had this method been followed, American ships would not have vanished from the seas. Business men have again and again demonstrated their ability to make successes out of political failures.

Nature never fails and yet she adapts herself to circumstances. So wise are her laws that she never gets into a rut. She does not make doctors that lose every patient, as we make Congressmen out of lawyers to cure our social diseases. She is not apathetic as to the expenditure of her forces, as voters who will not correct the abuses of the wasteful employment of their money. She is not the slave of custom nor is she the enemy of novelty. She is not afraid of a Burbank and others of his kind, in the improvement of flower and fruit. She willingly adapts herself under their hand to show forth the wealth of her treasures. She was not jealous of Franklin that he indicated the way to the utilizing of her powers. She loses nothing by the process, and her children gain much. She is no slave to custom, and, loving work, she is proud of inventors who show what she can do. Yet man, her beneficiary, is often blind even to his own interests. Year after year improvements are fought. The efforts of inventors are ridiculed. The thing

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is held to be impossible because it never has been done. Electricity could not be stored on account of its diffusiveness, so it was asserted, and if stored would be a constant menace, as electricity is when stored in the storm cloud. The electric light was useful as a scientific experiment in the cabinet, but could never be used for ordinary lighting in our homes. The machinery needed was too clumsy and expensive, the light too dazzling and harmful to the eyes, the current could not be divided practically. Could not? Ignorance, precisely because ignorance clings too tenaciously to the word "cannot." It itself cannot and it measures possibility by its own incapacity. Civilization will really exist then only when people have lost their terror of new ideas.

Nature in her wisdom brings harmony out of inequalities, and renders each useful to the other. Beauty in variety is her law. What would music be if limited to a single note no matter how charming? What the beauty of the human body if restricted to a single part or feature? Each has its own function and all conspire to the common welfare. Not all functions are the same; not all, perhaps, equal in the estimation of mankind; but all are of supreme utility; most of absolute necessity. If all were head, there would be neither hands nor feet. If all were eyes, we would lack the other senses save touch, and this would be useless in regard to the perception of external things, for the eye closes when brought into contact with them. In Nature there is no jealousy. The hands and feet work in willing harmony with the head. Nor does the head busy itself in plotting ways and means to thwart and paralyze the efforts of the

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stomach. It is in the social organism alone that such things happen because men are false to Nature. The stomach is the Capitalist of the human frame. It gathers the materials that are to be distributed through the body. It needs the direction of the head, just as Capital, in society, needs the direction of social authority. It should neither by unwise selfishness seek to retain everything for itself, nor by foolish inertia deprive the rest of the body of what it imperatively needs. The hands and feet are better off by having a stomach to help them, and the stomach is better off by having the assistance of the hands and feet. It is false and untrue to Nature, therefore, to consider Capitalists and Laborers as dissociated and antagonistic members of the social body. Both are merely human; each with its particular function; each looking to its own welfare, but, precisely for its own welfare, considerate of others. And this the more so in the social body, as in the turning of the wheel of fortune, one member may be converted into and replace the other. What is foot to-day may be changed into stomach tomorrow; what was stomach may be converted into foot; not only may, but actually is, so converted daily. And lo! the change of principles and ideas in virtue of the change of place and function. The Laborer becoming Capitalist turns out Capitalist through and through; the Capitalist, becoming Laborer, is true to the type.

The conflict is due to over-selfishness, often on one side, more commonly on both. The stomach, taken up with itself, would give as little as possible to hand and foot, blind to the fact that without the healthful exercise of the other parts it itself must suffer; and the hand and foot want to

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be stomach, thinking that it is so much better off than they. Each, shirking its own part, blames the other for the result. The law of self-preservation properly understood would make them work together in a sound and healthy mutual effort; ill-understood and practiced, it brings mutual ruin to both. Nature is fair. It asks a sacrifice in all the members, but makes compensation a hundred fold in the common welfare of all. The hand and foot, could they think, might be inclined to believe that because the stomach of itself does not move about as they do it is lazy and idle; just as the Laborer may think that the Capitalist has nothing to do but to enjoy his money. But the stomach labors even when the other members rest; and the Capitalist in the competition of business has oftentimes many a worry when the Laborer with the day's work over is at rest in the bosom of his family. Nature has attached to every state a counterbalance which easily escapes the notice of those who are not placed in it. Short-sighted humanity balks at present sacrifice. None wish to give and all are demanding to receive. All would feast at the banquet, but none will cook the victuals, and hence the mutual recriminations between selfish capital and selfish labor that fill the air and the consequent discontent and soreness. The Capitalist who listens to Labor only when Labor is strong enough to grasp him by the throat and force him to give ear, is as unfair and unjust as the Laborer who when fairly treated will give no ear to Capital; and because he believes he can grasp it by the throat strikes for higher wages and unfair hours, though reason tells him that Capital must go out of business, or, if it remains in it, either pay less to those who are not defended by

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Labor or raise proportionally the price of the product, and the Laborer is really no better off than before. The amount of money is indeed greater, but its purchasing value is less. The high cost of living must, while this unnatural contest rages, perforce remain.

Of all the problems, therefore, confronting the lawmakers and people in our country to-day, the most acute and far-reaching is the struggle of Capital versus Labor, or Labor versus Capital, as you choose to put it. Upon the fair solution of this problem hangs the peace and welfare of the United States. The disease that afflicts us is acute nervous prosperity, but nervous exaltation even more perhaps than nervous depression is fatal to the nerves. Both Labor and Capital should realize that peace, agreement, mutual understanding, equal rights and justice, cannot be secured by violence. We cannot continue as we are. There must be a readjustment, a readjustment in the fair spirit of compromise in which each side yields something to obtain in return mutual harmony and effort which are of greater value. A tug-of-war exhausts both. Compromise is Nature's way. In every chemical compound the elements sacrifice some of their properties to be enriched by others. Oxygen is a fierce burner, but in a compromise with hydrogen we have the cool and refreshing water. Nature will repay whatever fair compromise is made. Better is it for humanity that oxygen and hydrogen can compose their differences, and better is it for the elements themselves. They must exist side by side in Nature, and, as clashing factions, they would be the source of eternal war. How much better to combine in forming the dew and the rivulet,

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the brook and the lake, the majestic river and the unfathomed deep. You may hook horns with Nature, if you wish, but do not be astonished if you see stars. You have wasted your energy and must nurse your bones. The constitution she has framed for man is not subject to his amendment. She indicates the way, man deviates from it at his peril. Put an end to strife in the smaller units of society and you will pave the way to universal peace.

Nature labors and her children must labor with her. Work is the key to success in the struggle for existence. Labor, therefore, is the main thing of real value to us. It is for this reason that she supplies her materials in such abundance and leaves to us the finished product. Money is nothing more than a convenient means of measuring effort. If no one worked, money would have no value. If you have money and will not work, you will find yourself surrounded by others who will work and work ceaselessly to separate you from it. You cannot, therefore, avoid individual effort in life's struggle, and you must work intelligently or fail. Reason is given to direct us that we work aright. Right reason gives birth to sound judgment, sound judgment begets success. The farmer who does not cultivate his land and the farmer who sows bad seed neglect reason's guidance, judge badly and fail in life's struggle. Nature says "As you sow, so shall you reap." She has established the measure. You cannot change it. Neither will she, for she never goes on a strike, never refuses to perform her part—she leaves to you alone failure or success.

If money is but a convenient measure of effort, it is naturally flexible, for convenience has no absolute standard.

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But man has made it more arbitrary than need be, making inroads on it at various points and readjusting it temporarily to meet the exigencies of the moment. Many heads, much confusion; more confusion where there are less brains, or where there are plenty of brains not honestly employed. As money is a measure of effort, so conversely, effort becomes a measure of money. And if more money be given for less effort, less effort demands more money. Higher wages have naturally brought about a higher cost of living, since the same amount of effort that cost less before costs more now. Money's purchasing value has depreciated. The real value of effort is still the same, the money value is less. Labor organizations powerful enough to enforce their demands have obtained higher wages. Weaker unions or individuals whose wages have not proportionately advanced suffer. As the stronger unions get more pay, the price of articles advances to meet the unfair drain. Members of the weaker unions must purchase at prices proportioned to the higher wages of the others. When the wages of all are raised, the price goes still higher and people begin to howl. Everybody wants everybody else to come down but no one will lead the procession. Like the cats across the clothes-line, we are up in the air clawing each other. If it is a struggle of Nature, the survival, namely, of the one that can last longer, the advantage is with Capital; for Capital has it in its power at any time to cut the line, scamper to a place of safety and subsist on what it has hoarded. With the line cut and Capital in retirement, Labor will have to hustle to keep from starvation. A Bolshevistic revolution with its murder and rapine never benefits the people at large,

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nor does it ultimately benefit the leaders themselves, for the measure that they deal out to others is dealt out to them in turn. Where one part of Labor profits at the expense of the other part, as is usually the case, Labor pays the penalty, for a house divided against itself must fall. Nothing good is accomplished by traveling in circles. A fair way must be found to solve the problem, a way based on the real value of effort which will work automatically and eternally, as do the tides of the sea.

Nature goes to the root of the evil, so should a fair-minded Congress. Temporary legislation to cure this or that symptom or partial ailment only aggravates the evil when the medicine is prescribed without a careful examination of the patient. A medicine that will alleviate rheumatism will stop heart action if the heart be weak. There are times when Labor does not think and Capital does not feel, and hence the need of laws to prevent and correct excesses. But clear-eyed justice must rule here; blind justice tumbles everyone into the pit. For years Congress has been looking at one side—the regulation of Capital's tendency to combine in restraint of trade, and of the railroads to demand the limit of what traffic will bear. These are the sins of Capital. Correct them. But for the same reasons and as equally detrimental to society must organized Labor's tendency to limit production be curbed, for scarcity inflates prices and causes multiplied and needless hardships. Arbitration in fairness is the only road, and the sooner we take to it the sooner shall we reach the haven of peace.

Nature is thrifty. It doesn't like roundabout ways in which energy is wasted. Were we to copy her, we could

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remedy in great part the evils of the moment. The highest wage and lowest cost of living, consistent with fairness, should be the common aim. We could come nearer to the ideal by correcting our selling system. In this we are extravagantly wasteful. Save expense by getting the product to the consumer by the most direct route. Herein lies much of the solution of the high cost of living. At present the consumer gets the article, plus the producer's profit, plus the profit of all the intermediate handlers. Reason should guide us. In the primitive wilderness wild animals break the first trails. Usually they make them in lines that lead straightest to food and water. They choose the shortest, not the most labor-saving way. For them it is generally a question of life—to leave their haunts and return to them with the least possible time, beset as they are on all sides by enemies. The pioneers came and converted these trails into roads. The wild animals had done part of the labor. To take advantage of what they had done cheapened expense and hastened the road's completion. Moreover, the pioneer himself was beset by enemies, travel was not great, the articles transported were comparatively few. The road was far from ideal but it sufficed for his needs. Later, with the increase of civilization and its requirements, reason showed that the easiest way is really the shortest in the end, and roads were built to move heavy loads safely and easily. The pack-train with its inconveniences was discarded, the taverns along the road were no longer needed, a sign-board took the place of a guide, expense was correspondingly reduced and efficiency promoted. The trouble at present is that in distribution we are still following pack-

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train methods. We have guides in our drummers, we have our road-house men in our middle-men under whose roofs our goods pass many a night, and the consumer must pay for it all. Our development has been so rapid, our resources so great that economy has been thrown to the winds. When a ten-cent piece would close a hole, we plastered the hole with a dollar and didn't even take the time to see whether the dollar would stick. What is the difference? The consumer will be content to pay.

And yet the producer is not always to blame, or perhaps we should say the fault is not solely his. The consumer is wasteful. The factory that makes automobiles could deliver them directly to the user for about half the price that he pays at present, and make the very same profit, if the buyer did not oblige the manufacturer to incur so much expense in getting the auto to him. Making the estimate a very high one, the car that costs ultimately \$2,000 costs actually \$800 in the making. The car, direct from the factory, could be put in the hands of the buyer for \$1,200, and the profit of the maker would be greater than at present. The \$800 difference has gone in advertising, in salesmen, managers, bookkeepers, stenographers, rents and other overhead expenses. Each buyer should know the type of car he wants. Suppose that he doesn't know. Surely the investment of a few dollars would obtain the needed information; but now he is paying the \$800 and does so uncomplainingly, or if he complains he will make no effort to correct the method. From factory to user has been tried many times and as often has been abandoned as a failure. The fault is not in the system but in the public. It is hard to

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introduce new methods. Apathy combined with prejudice against innovations which are for its welfare retard the progress of humanity. From factory directly to buyer would force us to change our expensive selling methods. As lovers of the antique we will not change. A single factory or a dozen could not effect the reform, and we must jog on in our "one-hoss shay" until people are sufficiently educated or interested to support advanced methods.

Let us take another instance. A town of some five thousand people has six meat markets where two would supply the demand. What is the result? Instead of the expense of two markets, double rents, fixtures, ice, telephone, delivery, etc., we have the expense practically six-fold or tripled; or making an allowance for the increased personnel of the new markets and more extensive quarters, let us say four-fold or doubled. The same routes are worked over, books for six stores must be kept, and there are six managers, each expecting to make more than a clerk's salary in interest on his investment. Two shops handling the meat of the six could do so, therefore, at a greatly decreased expense; and while making a better profit give the meat to the customer at a lower price. The six barely eke out a living. The two would be healthy and prosperous concerns. Apply the principle to groceries, bakeries, dairies, etc., and we shall begin to realize our national waste.

Here again we should follow Nature's lead, for we are all, under different aspects, producers and consumers. The closer that production and consumption balance, the less the waste. Our aim, therefore, should be to strike an even balance. For any number of consumers, a definite number of

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producers and distributors are necessary and sufficient. When this number is exceeded waste follows. Let us illustrate the matter by Roosevelt's African expedition. All food that could not be obtained in the jungle had to be carried. For a month's trip, each packer could carry only twenty pounds over and above what sufficed for his personal needs, the limit of his load being sixty pounds. Now these packers had to provide, not for themselves only but for the guides, the head-man, the equipment-packers and all others connected with the party. How, therefore, was the party organized? How would any reasonable man organize it? By providing everything required by necessity and proper comfort, and by eliminating the superfluous. There were the packers of food. Ten were required for each hunter. There were the packers of hunting equipment. There were also the packers of the camping outfit. The packers of food and hunting equipment represent the producers of necessities in life, for the expedition was a hunting expedition and no hunting could be done without them. The camp-outfit carriers represent the producers of comforts and luxuries. They do not enter directly into the hunting, but in providing due means for rest and refreshment they enter indirectly and most efficiently. The absence of any of the elements would have spoiled the trip. But here is where common sense enters. Every person that is not needed is a hindrance; every superfluous pound carried is waste. Production and consumption should exactly balance if we would have the perfect hunting party. Production and consumption balanced is the perfect rule. This, therefore, we should keep in view, though in the uncertainties of human life and the

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need of providing for unforeseen difficulties, prudence dictates that production should moderately exceed estimated consumption. But this excess should be pruned as much as possible, for what is unconsumed is waste.

In a community, therefore, the same common sense should be used and the same rule applied. When in any trade we have more people in production and distribution than are needed to supply consumption, we have over-production and consequent waste. The balance is destroyed and efficiency is impaired. The excess of production is energy wasted. It adds nothing really to production, for what is not wasted by being unused is actually wasted in the support of the over-producer who is not required for social efficiency. He who eats up what he produces adds nothing to the common hoard. The same principle should be applied to the professions and to those that contribute to the comforts and luxuries of life. Lawyers and physicians and other professional men we must have, and a moderate number should be considered as necessities of modern and civilized life; but most of our professions are over-supplied and the ranks of producers are depleted to swell those of mere consumers. We need head-men and guides in the defense of our civil rights and the care of our bodies, but not too many. We need suppliers of our camping outfit when the toils of our daily hunt for life's necessities and comforts are over, for we need to go back solaced and refreshed to the hunt of the morrow; but here too we should never lose sight of the principle we have established, for it is of universal application. Moderate comforts and pleasures are not against Nature but in accordance with Nature. She wishes us to take necessary food. She adds

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to it the pleasure of taste. She does not measure us by inanimate machines, though even they need rest and oiling to properly perform their functions. She has made comfort and rest and pleasure a reward of past work and an incentive to future, and she allows the earth to rest in winter that it may awake to the activities of spring. She has no sympathy with socialistic doctrines for she has not made man on socialistic principles. She has established our individual struggle in which we must compete with our fellows, spurred on by the prize of honor and success. She has not established a class that would keep all on a level of inferiority, fostering apathy and curbing ambition. All that she asks is that in this struggle for advancement we so combine our efforts that we are not in one another's way; that we so divide our efforts that everything receives a duly proportioned care; that things be not spoiled by being over-done like the roast in the oven and energies wasted that are needed for solid progress. With this economic system sweetened by reward for extra effort and efficiency the world would advance more in a decade than it would advance in a century hampered by the socialistic straight-jacket. The remedy for the evils of our condition is not in cutting off energy in production, but in utilizing and fostering and increasing energy directed into proper channels, as we have shown in the law of production and consumption.

If Labor would, therefore, give the same attention to selling that it gives to wages, it would save twenty-five per cent on its purchases, and improve its condition in the same proportion. But just as in a crowd the cry "Stop Thief!" will raise a commotion and draw tradesmen from their work,

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even though the cry be false; and when no thief is found the crowd will return to its labors convinced that a theft has, nevertheless, been committed; so the cry of "Profiteer" is raised and all is hubbub and turmoil. That there is profiteering is readily conceded just as it is conceded that there is theft, from which profiteering often differs little. But the loss of the article that raised the cry "Stop Thief!" may be due to the negligence of the owner who lost it, but who, sore at the mishap and not taking time for reflection, pounces on some bystander that excites his suspicions. So the cry of "Profiteer" is raised to account for the loss of money entailed by higher prices, and the impression remains even when the manufacturer or merchant shows that he is barely making an honest profit. He is still suspected. The loss is mainly due, however, to the expensive selling system fostered and approved, at least tacitly, by the consumer, and in which billions of dollars are yearly lost.

But it is objected that our scientific selling would throw many out of employment, and that it is Labor's aim to employ as many as possible. Hence the unions have specialized labor, and forbidden the plumber to touch the carpenter's hammer; and forbidden the carpenter to stop a leak, however trivial, that will put a dollar in the plumber's pocket. Suppose we grant it. What follows? This only, that Labor does not wish the evil remedied. It wants all this unnecessary expense to be incurred for Labor's profit. It imagines that the public is being fleeced for Labor's special benefit, that the super-added expense is a pure gain for itself. It increases its membership by fostering those that divide the waste. Then let Labor honestly admit that it is responsible

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for the high cost of living and not cast the slur of profiteering on others, since this very thing is profiteering on a gigantic scale. It is demanding that billions be paid for unnecessary labor. And when from being Labor it turns Consumer, let it patiently bear the consequent loss of money, considering it as its contribution to Labor's welfare. But we do not think that if our principle were applied, the evils apprehended by the objection would follow. People would turn to other occupations more useful. Similar assertions have been made again and again and as often have been refuted by facts, whenever machinery has been introduced to supersede manual work. What would become of weavers, it was asked, if machinery were introduced into weaving? Of farm help, if into farming? Of carriers, if into transportation? Of typesetters, if into printing? I would never end were I to continue the list. Yet machinery has been applied to all of these, not to the detriment, but to the benefit of Labor. In the rearrangement those that were not needed turned their activities into other channels to the advantage of humanity. It was like throwing a stone into a brook: there was a splash for the moment, then the waters closed around it, even sang as they passed it, and danced down into the valley as clear and limpid and joyous as ever. And here the benefit would be even greater than when machinery took the place of hands, for then the laborers superseded were mere normal producers and consumers; here they are not producers but abnormal consumers. The change then would be of abnormal consumers into normal producers by a diverting of unprofitable energy into profitable channels. Croakers will croak because it is their nature to croak. They

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make the night hideous with their discord, but the sun rises just the same in the morning to flood the earth with its radiance. If prophecy of evil would have ended the world, it would have gone out of business long ago. Unnecessary work is wasted work, and wasted energy is loss of efficiency. Nature wastes neither materials nor effort, as we have previously asserted. The principle is so important that we may be allowed to again illustrate it. To the ordinary eye the burning of a log is merely the using up of the wood to obtain heat by liberating stored energy donated by the sun. The smoke and gases that escape through the chimney, and the ashes thrown out into the field, are to the unscientific mere waste. Not so in Nature's scheme. Her magic hand gathers the gases of the air and mingles the ashes with the soil, and, with the liberated energy again made available, she builds up new logs out of the seeming waste of the old. In the utilizing of matter and energy she is one hundred per cent efficient. Not an atom of material, not a spark of energy, escapes her.

Nature is bounteous and has spread out a whole world of material before us that we may adapt it to our needs and comforts. No nation in the world has been so favored as ours, not only in the abundance of raw material of every type lavishly stored up for us, but stored in a climate specially adapted to the exercise of energy. She has given us the sturdiest race on earth, as was proved in the late war. So favored, there is no reason, if we are but true to ourselves and Nature, why we should not take the lead among nations and keep it for all time. Abundance, however, has added its part in making us wasteful. We have not been compelled,

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as I stated before, to be economical. If we practised the thrift that Old World conditions made a necessity to its peoples, if we used all of our energies for useful production, if we eliminated wasteful effort, it would not take many centuries to develop our country to its fullest possibilities. Our very Government, prodigal as it is, could be supported on our waste. Why neglect what Nature has given us? Why not evolve the useless consumer into the useful producer that we may call all our potentialities into play? Our public lands would be settled by a thrifty race, and many, who, now spoiled by the example of our wastefulness, fill the alleys of our congested cities, would be nerved to take up life's struggle and become contented in the new opportunities afforded them. The lack of the small capital needed keeps many chained to an unhappy and degraded life. They are of races who have tilled the soil for ages, and whose wealth consisted of a few acres of land no better, if as good as our own, on which generation after generation lived, proud of the little home that sheltered them. What better investment for the Government than a loan to such as these? Our raw materials would be developed, our production accelerated and increased. The probable loss would be extremely small through failure or dishonesty—perhaps two per cent. Were our loss even a billion, which is not probable, our national wealth would increase twenty-five billions in ten years, with an increase of a healthy population and an immense revenue in governmental taxes.

Present production is strained to the utmost to supply the demands at home and abroad, and will be so strained during the period of reconstruction. As production will

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increase in other countries, demand for our products will naturally diminish. With the same production united to diminished demand, the price must fall and living become cheaper. The relation of supply and demand regulates price. Plenty makes the thing easily obtainable: many have it. If it exceeds demand, it becomes a drug on the market and is disposed of, not rarely, as a sacrifice. If diamonds were as plentiful as beans, they would be less valuable than beans, for these latter nourish life and diamonds do not. The world is at present in our debt. During the war our materials and labor were so much in demand that they transferred the balance of credit to our side. The money of the world flowed into our coffers, and what we have lent will come back in the labor-products of the various peoples. Their efforts for us will repay our efforts for them. They must upbuild themselves meanwhile and supply their own necessities. But inevitably a balance will be struck, their products will have paid the debt, and, exceeding home demand, will enter our markets as simple competitors. The situation, therefore, will be this: We have over-produced to provide for them, and now that they can provide for themselves their surplus will naturally make its way to our shores. The double surplus will glut our markets and many now employed will be discharged. Labor should make hay while the sun shines and not lose the golden opportunity in bickerings and strikes. Nature presents the chance, man must avail himself of it. She will not force compliance. Nature gave Ajax his physical forces. He had to use them.

The tendency of certain classes has been to turn up their noses at Labor. They forget that all they have is due to

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Labor, labor mental or physical, of themselves or their forefathers. If what they have is not due to labor but to theft from the people or the Government, their scorn should be a boomerang on themselves. This class pride most intense in those who have least reason for it, is responsible for many inroads on our efficiency. What is looked down upon is naturally avoided. We all have our self-respect and pride. We may not care for the open approval of others, conscious that we are doing right and content with our condition, but contempt hurts all and is cheerfully borne by the exceptional few. We avoid it if we can and submit from sheer necessity when we can't. When necessity ceases our submission ceases with the necessity. And yet human life is such and human needs are so varied that either life cannot exist at all or cannot exist comfortably without the performance of offices humble in themselves. Take the cook, for instance. Who more needful for human existence? We need food several times a day. Food in turn needs proper preparation. The appetite is apathetic, the stomach in rebellion, the nerves fussy and irritable, if proper food be lacking. With internal discord, how can we have external peace? The cook is really the master of the world, while we, in our short-sightedness, foolishly look down on him. Nature tells us it should not be so. The artist who charms the eye stands high in the social scale; the musician who with the seductiveness of his melodies, woos the ear; the perfume maker who gratifies the sense of smell; the maker of soft fabrics grateful to the touch; all are held in honor. By what principle of common sense is the cook excluded who appeals to the sense of taste? This sense is, in fact, more intimately

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connected with material life than any of the others, and in itself is nobler than the sense of touch. It is even taken in our language as a standard for artist, and musician, and perfumer, and designer of our fashions, for no condemnation is more severe than to say that a thing is not in good taste. As a sense, therefore, it has no reason to hang its head. Those, then, that cater to it should participate in its honor; and if we followed the dictates of Nature it would not be so hard to find good cooks.

We often think we are following Nature when we are merely submitting to the slavery of custom. It is hard to cast off the fetters of custom and get into the line of real progress. The German soldier trained in the goose-step carries it with him into ordinary life. A farmer, writing on "Daylight Saving," said that the good old sun-time he had always followed was good enough for him, and that he saw no reason for changing his methods in the interests of the railroads or anybody else. He was not aware that probably in all his life he had never used the true sun-time. What farmer has ever bothered himself about the exact meridian of his farm or worried over the fact that with every step east or west the true meridian changed. As a practical man he adopted a practical rule without bothering about astronomical exactness. The practical principle he adopted was the practical principle advocated by the Government. The scale was larger, the principle the same. The variations of true time were eliminated within certain areas in favor of common convenience. In 1882 the Government divided the country into various sections and standardized the time for each, to the immense advantage of all. Fixed standards

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replaced uncertainties, and though they could not eliminate the uncertainties of individual watches, they established that by which these uncertainties could be known and regulated. The railroads, to whom time is a matter of vital importance, welcomed the reform. The public, believing itself less interested, moved slowly. Two hour-hands were used on the clocks, one to indicate standard time, the other to indicate popular time. The latter was called sun-time, but, as we have seen, so called by common error. Like the farmer, people were not going to change in favor of the railroads or anybody else. It took time to change them. They awoke finally to the appreciation of the fact that they were the beneficiaries, and clocks had henceforth but one hour-hand, the hour-hand of standard time. Like the people at large when the innovation was first introduced, the farmer now objects because he fancies that the regulation of time is a tampering with his rights. There is not a shadow of infringement. He can regulate his day to suit himself. The clock marks six. He can begin his day an hour earlier or an hour later and distribute the day to meet his personal needs. The law leaves him perfectly free. It is a common convenience established for the whole people. He is no more obliged to use it than he is to use tractors if he prefers his one-horse plow, or his six-horse, whichever it may be. In sun-time there is an hour's difference between Ohio and Nebraska, yet the standard clocks of the farmers in both states mark the same identical time. Neither, however, has experienced any inconvenience, for the sunlight is the same however it be marked, and each one uses it to suit himself. Neither farmer has ever complained about hardships inflicted by the system.

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But when President Wilson proposed that "Daylight Saving" be continued, the farmers were up in arms. The plow-share was turned into the political sword and the citadel of Congress stormed. The direct benefit was for the city people. What benefited the city injured the country interests, they said. Nothing more foolish. The city lives on the products of the country. The city, therefore, cannot be benefited without benefiting the country. The farmer thought it could, and as he considered that he was entitled to "a pound of flesh," he looked around for good, racy, well-fed flesh, and so got Congress' "goat." Is it a case of mere thoughtlessness, or pure, unadulterated, short-sighted selfishness? Nature gave the farmer the sun-light clock, which, without inconvenience, he can always use. The case is not the same in the city. Not that it is not the same sun that shines, or that the sun shines differently, but that city conditions are different, and that comfort, convenience and economy demand another standard. The farmer's business is more individual and is simpler. He is little concerned with what his neighbor does—when he rises, or works, or goes to bed. But city business is an intricate maze of allied and intertwined efforts, and so it must follow other rules. The city man depends on his neighbor in a score of ways and is impotent without him. It was said of old, "A brother helped by a brother is like a strong city." Modern life has made the converse true: "A strong city is a brother helped by a brother." The farmers who need clocks mainly that when they deal with the railroads they may time themselves with the railroads, protest against an improvement highly important to city folk who need clocks to time

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themselves with one another, and whose energies must absolutely be regulated by the clock and not by the sun. But human nature is, at times, cranky and the crank often works the wrong way. For once Wilson was right. It is a grievous crime against Nature to rob a poor man of the little he has, and this is what Congress did when it robbed President Wilson of even this moiety of glory.

Nature has many children, and for their preservation and betterment divides them into many groups. The intensely selfish love of a mother for her child is a clear example of the workings of one of the basic principles of Nature. How else could she provide for the preservation of the individual who is a tyrant of so many needs? Nature sweetens the labor that money cannot purchase. Maternal love must necessarily be selfish, but its very selfishness is ordered to a higher end, the preservation of the family. And here again Nature shows her wisdom. The family in turn reacts and becomes the preserver of its members. The family is the unit of the community and perpetuates it; the community defends and safeguards the family. The circle increases. The community forms the state, the state the nation, the nation the world of humanity; and each repays its preservation by preservation in turn. But as the circle widens each individual is less needed and his contribution is smaller. In return, the benefits received because more widely diffused, and as they are less intimately directed to individual advantage they are more apt to escape a thoughtless eye. So we are inclined to overlook Nature's benefits when they are universal and abundant, as typified in water, and air, and sunlight. We do not suffer from individual need of them as

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a rule, and, as a rule, forget the hand that blesses us. Hence it is that in proportion as our contribution to state preservation becomes inappreciable, we cease to connect state-preservation with self-preservation. We, however, soon connect it when state government ceases, as happens when a calamity befalls a city and unruly passions no longer feel the hand of restraining authority. All of Nature's children form one vast family, and the duty of each individual stretches out beyond community, and state and nation, to the world at large, to each individual of our common humanity. As the world is one family, children of a common parent, every civilized country should recognize its duties both national and international. The barbarian has the same duties as civilized man but his mind lacks the culture to perceive them. If, for the preservation of its national life, free access to the sea be needed, such access should not be denied by a larger and stronger nation. A fair arrangement will be of mutual benefit, and honesty and justice are ever the best policy. Just as individuals for self-preservation must preserve the family and tribe, so must families preserve the nation. The individual may do so out of well-ordered self-interest, and there is nothing in reason against nations acting from the same motive. In fact, as self-interest is the most powerful incentive to individual effort, so is self-interest in nations the strongest incentive to national effort. Americans, British, French, Italians, Germans, must look first to their own immediate interests according to the law of self-preservation. What they have to guard against is the so limiting themselves to these interests that they neglect the duties which lie beyond. Self-love is the law of Nature and we would not have it otherwise.

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When the self-preservation of one individual comes in conflict with the self-preservation of another, the struggle becomes acute and the fitter will survive. Aggregation of individuals and families into communities and states tends to lessen the frequency of such conflict, for where many are banded together mutual effort can provide more abundantly for all, since power united has a wondrous efficacy where forces disunited are impotent. It is plain that in forming this union each element must yield something, to be repaid, however, by something immensely better. Nature gives nothing for nothing. The savage entering civilization gives up his unrestricted freedom, but he obtains in return a peace and security unattainable before. He has now defenders of his rights, protectors against oppression, knowledge and laws of life that render him worthy of the name of man. The League of Nations with due limitations, must follow similar principles. Something of independent national action must be sacrificed, leaving national existence and rights intact, that disputes may not end in war and that peace universal may reign.

We want peace for the world because each individual wishes peace for himself. The world cannot be at war and the individual at peace. But peace is true only when based on justice. A peace based on unfairness is a building built on quicksands. We want peace for the world, but we want peace for ourselves, and we are willing to make efforts and sacrifices to obtain it. But we should not be asked to make sacrifices that would introduce a principle of perpetual unrest into our own national existence. The League of Nations proposed that for the welfare of others we bind

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ourselves to things in which we have no immediate interest, as, for example, that we send our boys whenever called upon to fight on foreign soil. We fought shoulder to shoulder with other nations in the last war because our rights were assailed and our citizens murdered in cold blood. We fought for our national existence, because we knew that German militarism, dominant in Europe, would have attacked us next. We fought for our very manhood, for Germany and the world believed that, as a peaceful and commerce-loving country, we so adored the almighty dollar that we had not the red blood to fight for our rights and were impotent in our unpreparedness. For these reasons we fought, nor reckoned we the cost, and for the same reasons we would fight again. Humanity was benefited, for its cause was linked with ours. As the war progressed, idealism forced itself into the limelight. The real causes that justified our entrance, and, in virtue of which alone, Congress could according to the constitution declare war, were huddled into a heap in the corner and platitudes on humanity took their place. So far there was no harm. We were fighting for ourselves and humanity; preference did not matter; the law, moreover, curbed tongue and pen. Excited passions and alert suspicion were prone to misinterpret criticism, however just, into sympathy for the enemy and a hindrance to united effort. Idealists took silence for consent, and the Paris conference that framed the League was held under this stern hand of repression. The other nations had preyed upon our idealism and generosity during the war. They were loth to part with them after the war. In their heart of hearts and in their own selfishness, we were Lady Bountiful to scatter our millions and

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Uncle Easy Mark to listen to a tale of woe which was not, however, altogether without foundation. They clapped idealism on the back, told it what a good fellow it was, loaded the dice and pocketed the profits. No wonder that a League was born which meant every advantage to them, none to us. The law of national self-preservation, the first and essential law of national peace and existence, was overlooked in a good-fellowship that was limited to goodness to themselves. It is time to leave idealistic altitudes and get down to practical life. The mirage is beautiful to contemplate but it has no substance. Our thirty billions of debt that will weigh us down for generations, our internal unrest, our labor troubles, the high cost of living, call for our best energies at home; and while a man's own household is in disorder, as usually happens with idealists, it is well to let the affairs of others alone. We do not want another war. The boys that came back from France do not want it. The mothers that have spent years that seemed decades scanning the lists of the dead and wounded and missing, fearing daily that some loved name should be found in them, do not want it. The wives and mothers of those who have made the supreme sacrifice pray earnestly that others may be spared their agony. And yet there are those who would have us waste the lives of our boys, waste our property, our peace and happiness, to promote the selfish interests of peoples whose chief aim is to increase their territory or gain an economic advantage over their rivals. They would like to have us cats' paws to draw the chestnuts from the fire, while they wink at our simplicity and grow fat in eating them. "Let each one attend to his own business," such is Nature's law.

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Germany, because she had the power, wrongfully and forcibly took Alsace and Lorraine from France, and the peacemakers at Paris returned them, seemingly in accord with the principle of the self-determination of nations. What stock they took in the principle their subsequent actions showed. Germany had also taken Shantung from China. The offender was the same; the theft less pardonable, for Alsace and Lorraine were countries adjacent to Germany, many of their inhabitants were of Teutonic origin, their incorporation was an additional defense to the German people. Shantung was stolen merely because it helped German trade and gave it a foothold in the Far East. The people were pure Chinese, detached forcibly from the Chinese republic. Did the Peace Conference restore Shantung to China, even though China was actually an ally and had helped in the war? Not they. In giving back Alsace and Lorraine, what had moved them was neither justice nor the rights of peoples but the sheerest self-interest. And this principle of selfishness they applied to weak China, canonizing in strong Japan what they bitterly condemned in strong Germany. What was wrong in Germany was right in them and their allies, and with shameless inconsistency, or rather with the shameless consistency of self-interest divorced from justice, they gave Shantung to Japan. And it is with such nations unrepentant, nay openly glorying in their infamy, that we are asked to form a League of Nations and fight their battles, because, forsooth, we, ourselves, are too strong for the wolves to tear. The idealism of self-determination was coldly turned out of doors, and its friends, abandoning it, are pounding on the door and craving admittance,

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yearning to enter even if they have to squeeze through the windows. Shirt-sleeve diplomacy, nay mere manly diplomacy, is at a discount. Paris and London dictate the style. Our boys gave their lives for principle. America should see that their sacrifice be not in vain.

Wars will ever be so long as common justice does not rule the nations, and so long as a people's standard is sordid self-interest. Wars can alone end when each is willing to meet the other in a spirit of fair compromise, each yielding for the greater good of peace some minor advantages to themselves. The stickler for rights is always in hot water. Wars should end by common agreement founded on justice and not on a scrap of paper. If men, however, will not be ruled by reason, it is not impossible that Nature, like a justly irate mother may, through fear, force them to be good. Invention may be the scourge that she holds in her hand. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that a poisonous gas should be invented, so deadly that in a single day a thousand aeroplanes would work such havoc that nations must either be destroyed or come to terms. Such invention would have the effect, moreover, of reducing greatly the disproportion between large and small nations just as the introduction of fire-arms reduced the lordly knight to the level of the peasant soldier. The element of might, so powerful in the hands of the unscrupulous, would no longer be the sole heritage of the favored few. It would be common to all and so deadly that as the survival of our very race would be at stake terror would force mankind to the observance of mutual agreements and justice. Not the noblest motive, it is true, but in certain cases the most efficient. Scraps of paper would be out of fashion.

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Nature, through reason, tells her children how degrading war is when waged for the love of war. It is a last resource against an unjust aggressor when important rights and liberties are at stake and when there is no other way of defending them. The glory of militarism, save for defensive purposes, is human shame and crime. A nation sends forth her armies to kill the people of another nation and bids them kill as many as they can. He who succeeds in killing most becomes a hero and honors are heaped upon him. There is nothing more repugnant to man than the shedding of human blood. Even in defense of our life we hate to kill and do so only when all other means have failed. It is barbarism to sacrifice life for mere aggrandizement. It is murder, wholesale murder, to force a war that can in honor be avoided, and the militarist who provokes conflict cannot be punished too severely. Historians unthinkingly have sadly injured our race in placing on the pinnacle of glory men who were mere murderers and robbers on a gigantic scale, and whose names, instead of praise, merit the execration of humanity. But it is the same paradoxical spirit that applauds itself for its justice in putting the petty thief into jail, and putting the millionaire swindler into a magnificent palace. The slaying of an individual is murder, the murder of millions is virtue.

Many are heartily in favor of a League of Nations. Ajax would have bitterly opposed it. They are in favor of it because they consider it synonymous with a League of Peace. To be such in reality, there should be a common and high standard of civilization. Such is not the condition of the world at present. The nations are in all stages of civilization. The standard in Europe is different than that in Asia.

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Each people has its own criterion of civilization and progress. America has advanced rapidly, more rapidly than any other nation, since less hampered by old ways and traditions. Any attempt at a union of nations must take into allowance these facts. We must not allow our normal progress to be impeded and held back by less progressive nations. When people are tied together their pace is regulated by the slower. The laggard resents being forced to a more rapid pace, especially if he believes that there is no reason for hurry. Nations hide-bound in traditions do not thank us for our efforts to free them. Our viewpoint and theirs is different, and it is hard to bring them to ours.

We have not to go back so many years to live in times when Americans found only quill pens in the leading hotels of London and typewriters were a curiosity. We have not to go back at all to find conveniences that are common even to the ordinary among us lacking in Europe to classes that are considered as living in luxury. It is easy, therefore, to fathom why national jealousy is, at times, so strong against us, and why older nations begrudge us our commanding position in the world.

Primitive civilization was centered in Asia. Thence it passed through many nations, westward, westward, till Greece and afterwards Rome became the centers of culture. Westward it still traveled until the ocean stopped it for a time, when it leaped the ocean, in accordance with its law. It was in a wilderness that it took up its abode and its palace was a log-house. But it breathed the invigorating air of freedom and new life pulsed in its veins. It had languished in the effete monarchies of the Old World: it would show what

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it could do in the New. It had to look forward some centuries, but age had given it wisdom. It had a domain, materials, a race such as it never had before with which to build its empire. It was for once satisfied with its surroundings. No wonder that we are satisfied with its work. Its children would be called Provincials by those who, in reality, were not even worthy themselves to be called Provincials, as the limits of town, or village or city in which they had been born usually limited their horizon. A journey of twenty miles was the event of a lifetime, and double the distance, often less, wrought a change even in their very speech. The European, circumscribed by his immediate surroundings, was commonly only an approach to a Provincial. But ignorance was bliss, and he ascribed his own limitations to us. On landing in New York if he did not have to fight the Indians on his way up to the Waldorf-Astoria, he had to be careful to escape tomahawk and scalping knife if he ventured without the walls of the city. Our "Wild West" moving pictures, doubtless, helped the hallucination.

But civilization had done its work well and Europe awoke from its dream and found an army of some two millions on its shores. Civilization had crossed the water again to show what it had effected, and millions were behind to follow if needed. They were not needed. The sneers of Germany had been answered and its eagle, pitted against ours, turned and fled. The "Watch on the Rhine" was no longer effective. America could cross the Rhine. Xerxes with a bridge of boats had crossed the Hellespont and ages recounted the wonder of the exploit. America crossed the Atlantic with a greater army, provisioned and armed, in the teeth of the

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deadly submarine. "It is impossible," said Europe. "Behold it accomplished," was America's answer. Europe had aided in the transportation for its own immediate benefit. For this benefit we had to pay. We crossed the fields of France and died to save them for the nation. France would have taxed us for the crossing. But we invited sordidness by our over-generosity. The spirit that plucked our tourists would pluck us as a nation. Will nothing open our eyes? The clouds of war, the confusion of battle have passed. We must pause to breathe and find out where we stand. We live in a practical, not idealistic, world; and in practical Nature action is followed by a corresponding reaction. Such is Nature's law. Over-generosity can ruin the nation. Sympathy we must have for others, but we must not forget those that are our own. Other countries have suffered untold hardships during the war. We have not escaped unscathed, and though, like our boys on the battlefield, we bear our wounds uncomplainingly, we should not neglect them. We must not let our hearts run away with our heads. Returning soldiers tell us that France's sufferings are less dire than they have been painted. The French were not nearly as willing to make sacrifices as we, and the middle classes in France are materially better off than ever before, owing to the billions of money left among them by the foreign soldiers. We must not, we repeat, listen merely to sentiment. Nature has given us judgment as the rule of life.

We hear of apparent ingratitude in the Allies towards us. It is to be expected. A peacemaker that enters into a neighbor's quarrel, however good his intentions and however upright his conduct, generally gets the worst of it. Still we

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have no cause to regret our action. We were forced to fight for ourselves as well as for Europe, and good will ultimately result, as resulted in Cuba and the Philippines. Nature has her varying seasons. The cold of winter must not dishearten us. Every winter is followed by spring. Let us devote our energies to ourselves and leave the rest to the calm decision of the future. Nature and Time may not move fast enough for our impatience, but they know their business. We did not seek popularity and can get on without it. We told the world that we wanted nothing, and it gave us less.

All human institutions, therefore, as we stated at the beginning of our essay, must conform themselves to Nature's plan. We cannot change it, devoid as we are of all control. She has made and enforces the Supreme law. Not in conflict with her but in conformity is our path of progress. Intelligent study of Nature's methods will solve our problems; even, as we said, the problem of Capital and Labor, which is ever recurrent, due to the violation of Nature's laws on one side or the other. Let Nature's fairness be our rule. Troubles, like shadows, fade in a counter light, and the shadows of this problem which hang ominously over our national peace at present will fade forever, if the counter light of intelligent effort and reasonable compromise be thrown upon it.

The cloud that hung over the plain and that Ajax defied, bore in its bosom blessings untold for the responsive earth. Let Nature have her way and she will shower her blessings upon us through all the years to come. The atmosphere will be purified, the birds resume their notes of gladness, objects will be seen in a clearer light, the blue arch of heaven will smile upon us, the dust of conflict will be laid and peace

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reign. Let us work with Nature to sweeten human life. She welcomes, nay pleads for, our aid, yet leaves the choice to us. How much better to strew life's pathways with her flowers than to line them with poison oak or ivy, or with thistles and brambles obstruct the way. Let our kindliness, like Nature's, live in the present, for we should ever remember that our human hearts prize far more highly a simple bud of spring, though plucked at random, while we can know and love the hand that gives it, than the rarest blooms however artistically blended that waste their fragrance on our unappreciative grave.

But most of all, and this is of the highest moment, let us not like Ajax seek to change benignant into malignant forces, or Zip! Zip! Crack! Unworthy children of Nature, we alone are responsible for the result.





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